

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. S-510

### 1. Name of Property

(indicate preferred name)

historic W. E. Gibson & Bro. Packinghouse (Site)  
other

### 2. Location

street and number Jersey Road not for publication  
city, town Crisfield vicinity  
county Somerset

### 3. Owner of Property

(give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Robert P. Evans III  
street and number P. O. Box 468 telephone 410-968-1717  
city, town Crisfield state Maryland zip code 21817

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Somerset County Clerk of Court liber 427 folio 435 Parcel 4  
city, town Princess Anne tax map 102 tax parcel 189 tax ID number

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District  
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER  
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT  
☐ Other:

### 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	0	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	0	<input type="checkbox"/> Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> government		
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry		
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape		
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture		
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
		<input type="checkbox"/> social		
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress		
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown		
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use		
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:		
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory	

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## 7. Description

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Inventory No. S-510

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### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered

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Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The W. E. Gibson & Bro. packinghouse formerly stood on Jersey Island in the City of Crisfield, Somerset County and was demolished during the late 1980s. The packinghouse stood between the former properties of George A. Christy on the south and a boat slip on the north. The two-story, four-bay brick packinghouse had a principal exposure to the northwest. The primary documentation for the W. E. Gibson & Bro. property is an historic image that dates around 1920 along with the series of Sanborn Insurance maps.

Built around 1905, the two-story, four-bay, common bond brick packinghouse was distinguished by a decorative Victorian brick cornice with projecting pilasters at each corner. The first and second stories were lighted by an asymmetrical fenestration of single-pane sash windows with double rowlock segmental arches spanning the openings. A centrally located door provided access to the first floor. The corner pilasters stretched to the underside of a decorative, corbelled brick cornice that embellished the top of the parapet wall. Ball finials fixed atop small brick bases accented the top of each pilaster.

The northeast side of the packinghouse was a stepped parapet wall with single flue stacks rising through the top of the parapet.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. S-510

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

Specific dates

Architect/Builder

Construction dates

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The firm W. E. Gibson & Bro. was a principal packer of seafood in Crisfield, and its packinghouse on Jersey Island stood in a line of prominent structures along the city's harbor entrance. Documented by an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century image, the building was similar to the old Christy Company packinghouse that remains standing on Jersey Island. The building was demolished in order to create a parking area between the remaining buildings.

### HISTORY AND SUPPORT

William E. Gibson and his brother Benjamin surface in the public records as Crisfield oyster packers in 1892 with the purchase of the Dixon Oyster house, located in the section of town known as "Jersey."<sup>1</sup> The Gibsons paid \$2,000 for oyster packinghouse and property which their family retained for nearly one hundred years. The W. E. Gibson & Brother firm, packing oysters as well as crab, appeared in a listing of Crisfield businesses printed in the *Maryland Gazetteer* the same year.<sup>2</sup>

The Gibson brothers financed the construction of a new brick packinghouse between 1911 and 1917, according to the Sanborn Insurance maps published in those years.<sup>3</sup> In 1913, a number of well-known crab packers in Crisfield organized a corporation known as the American Sea Food Company to better the conditions of the soft crab industry. With headquarters in Crisfield, they planned to handle the soft crab business at all points along the coast with branch houses in North Carolina and Virginia as well as Crisfield. It was hoped that the consolidation of several large firms, including W. E. Gibson & Brother, that the industry could be handled to a better advantage for all concerned, and that the marketing of soft crabs could be improved to the benefit of the catcher as well as the shipper. W. E. Gibson was treasurer of the new organization.<sup>4</sup>

The Sanborn Insurance maps show W. E. Gibson & Bro.'s oyster and crab house on Jersey Island, and

<sup>1</sup> Somerset County Land Record, HFL 11/88, July 2, 1892.

<sup>2</sup> *Maryland Gazetteer, 1891-92*, Vol. II, Baltimore: R. L. Polk & Co.

<sup>3</sup> Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1911 and 1917, Microfilm at the Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture.

<sup>4</sup> "Have Formed Company," *The Oysterman and Fisherman*, March 1913, p. 33.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. S-510

Name W. E. Gibson & Bro. Packinghouse  
**Continuation Sheet**

Number 8 Page 1

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notations indicate the second floor was used as a sail loft.<sup>5</sup> By the time the 1917 map was issued a second packing house had been divided for various tenant firms to pack oysters, and tenement housing for oyster shuckers had been built on the back of the lot. An inlet for vessels to access the leased oyster houses bordered the property on its northeast side and 10<sup>th</sup> Street provided access to downtown Crisfield by way of the Jersey bridge.

The Gibson packinghouse property on Jersey Island remained in family hands until 1986 when it was acquired by R. Preston Evans and his wife Carolyn.<sup>6</sup> The old Gibson packinghouse was demolished to provide for additional parking space between the former Christy building and the boat slip next to the old L. R. Carson building. The entire complex is now the facility of H. Glenwood Evans and Son.

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<sup>5</sup> Sanborn Insurance Map, 1911, microfilm at the Nabb Research Center of Delmarva History and Culture.

<sup>6</sup> Somerset County Land Record, 363/635, December 30, 1986.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. S-510

Name W. E. Gibson & Bro. Packinghouse  
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 2

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W. E. Gibson & Bro. Packinghouse  
Jersey, Crisfield, Somerset County, Maryland  
Chain of title

Parcel Four of Five owned by Robert P. Evans III

427/435 R. Preston Evans and Carolyn H. Evans

to

2/1/1995 Robert P. Evans III

Plat 7/8/1945, BLB 132/67

....being all that land owned by the heirs of William E. Gibson and Benjamin F. Gibson in the Jersey section of Crisfield listed on Tax Map No. 10-9-12 and being that property conveyed to William E. Gibson and Benjamin F. Gibson, HFL 11/88

363/635 Aldine Gibson, et al.

to

12/30/1986 R. Preston Evans and Carolyn H. Evans

\$45,000 ....bounded on the south by Jersey Road on the west by the lands of R. Preston Evans and Carolyn Evans on the north by the Crisfield harbor on the east by the lands of John W. Parks, Jr. and John L. Parks

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. S-510

Name W. E. Gibson & Bro. Packinghouse  
**Continuation Sheet**

Number 8 Page 3

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HFL 11/88

Thomas J. Dixon

to

7/2/1892

William E. Gibson and Benjamin F. Gibson

\$2,000 W. E. Gibson & Brother

all that piece or parcel of ground situated in the town of Crisfield, Somerset County, Maryland and in that part of said town known as Jersey and commonly called the Dixon Oyster House being fully described in a deed to the said Thomas J. Dixon from the Commissioners appointed by the Circuit Court for Somerset County to value and divide the real estate of Nathaniel Dixon, deceased

*Maryland Gazetteer, 1891-92, Vol. II, R. L. Polk & Co., 112 North Charles St. Baltimore, Maryland*

W. E. Gibson & Bro., oysters and crab

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Inventory No. S-510

*Maryland Gazetteer, 1891-92*, R. L. Polk & Co., Baltimore, Maryland.

Sanborn Insurance Maps, various issues, microfilm at the Nabb Research Center of Delmarva History & Culture.

Somerset County Land Records, various volumes, Somerset County Courthouse.

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property ¼ acre  
Acreage of historical setting ¼ acre  
Quadrangle name Crisfield, Maryland

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The historic metes and bounds of this property are coincidental with the current boundary of the parcel.

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## 11. Form Prepared by

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name/title	Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian, and Virginia Jenkins, Business Historian, CBMM		
organization	Private Consultant	date	12/10/2001
street & number	P. O. Box 5	telephone	410-651-1094
city or town	Westover	state	Maryland 21871

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600

S-510, W. E. Gibson & Brother  
Sanborn Insurance Map, 1885

River

Somer's Cove

Annenesset

JASTUBBS  
OYSTER HO.  
Negro Tenants 24

B.S. CHURCH  
OYSTER HO  
Negro Tenants 24

RIGGIN BROS.  
OYSTERS &  
CRABS  
Tenants 24

OYSTER HO.  
Tenants 24

G.S. MCGREEDY  
OYSTER HO.  
Negro Tenants 24

12



No. 2.

SHEET

SEE

River

Unmeasured

S-510, W. E. Gibson & Brother  
Sanborn Insurance Map, 1891

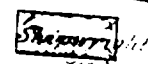
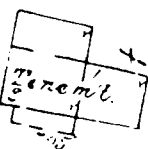
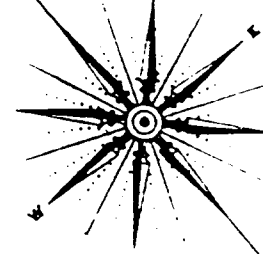
SHELL ROAD TO BRIDGE

J. A. STUBBS  
OYSTER HO.  
Shells  
Tenants 702  
20

B. S. CHURCH  
OYSTER HO.  
1000s

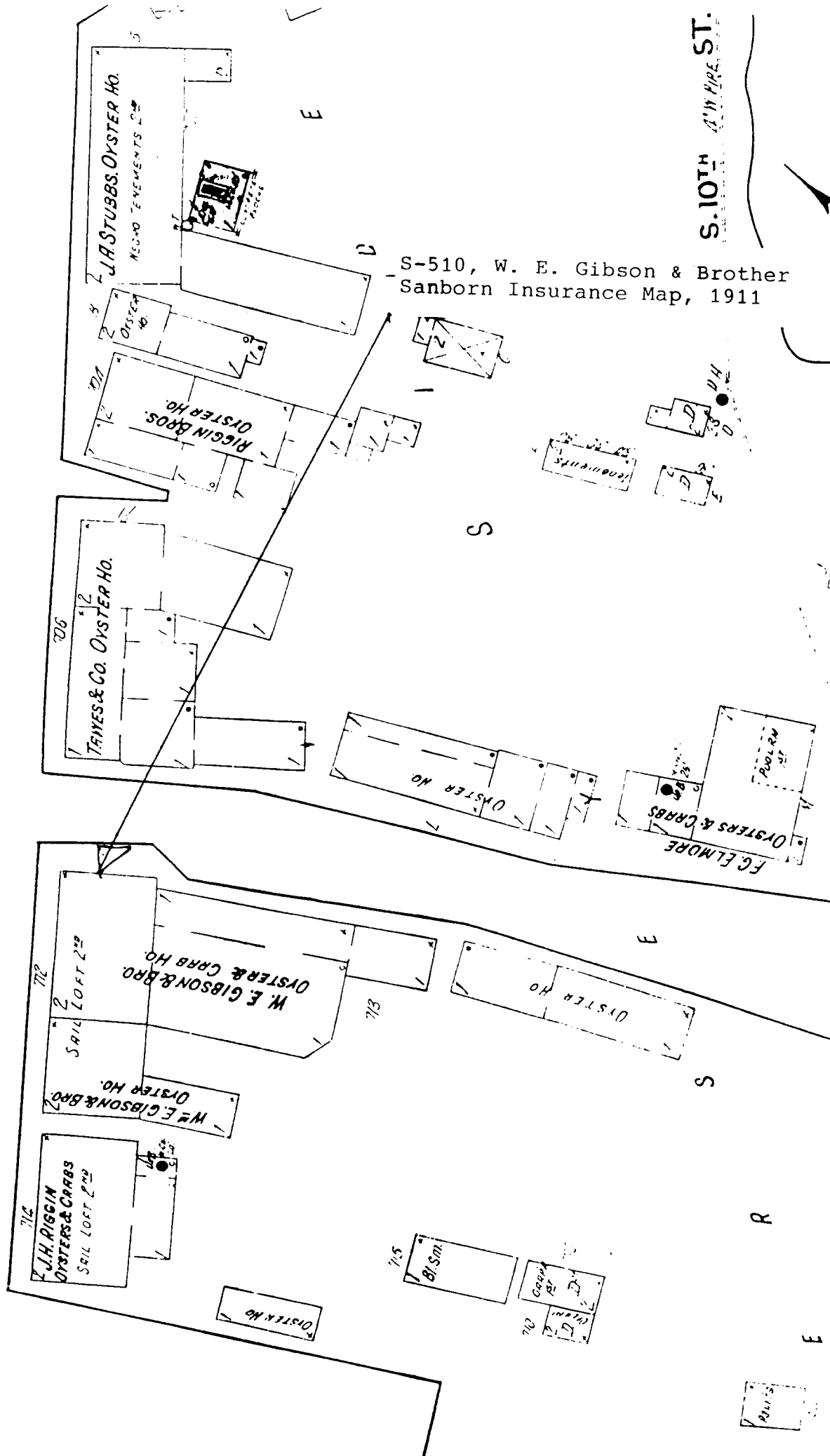
RIGGIN BROS.  
OYSTERS &  
CRABS  
Tenants  
9-101 102  
20

T. DIXON  
OYSTER HO.  
Tenants  
Unmeasured





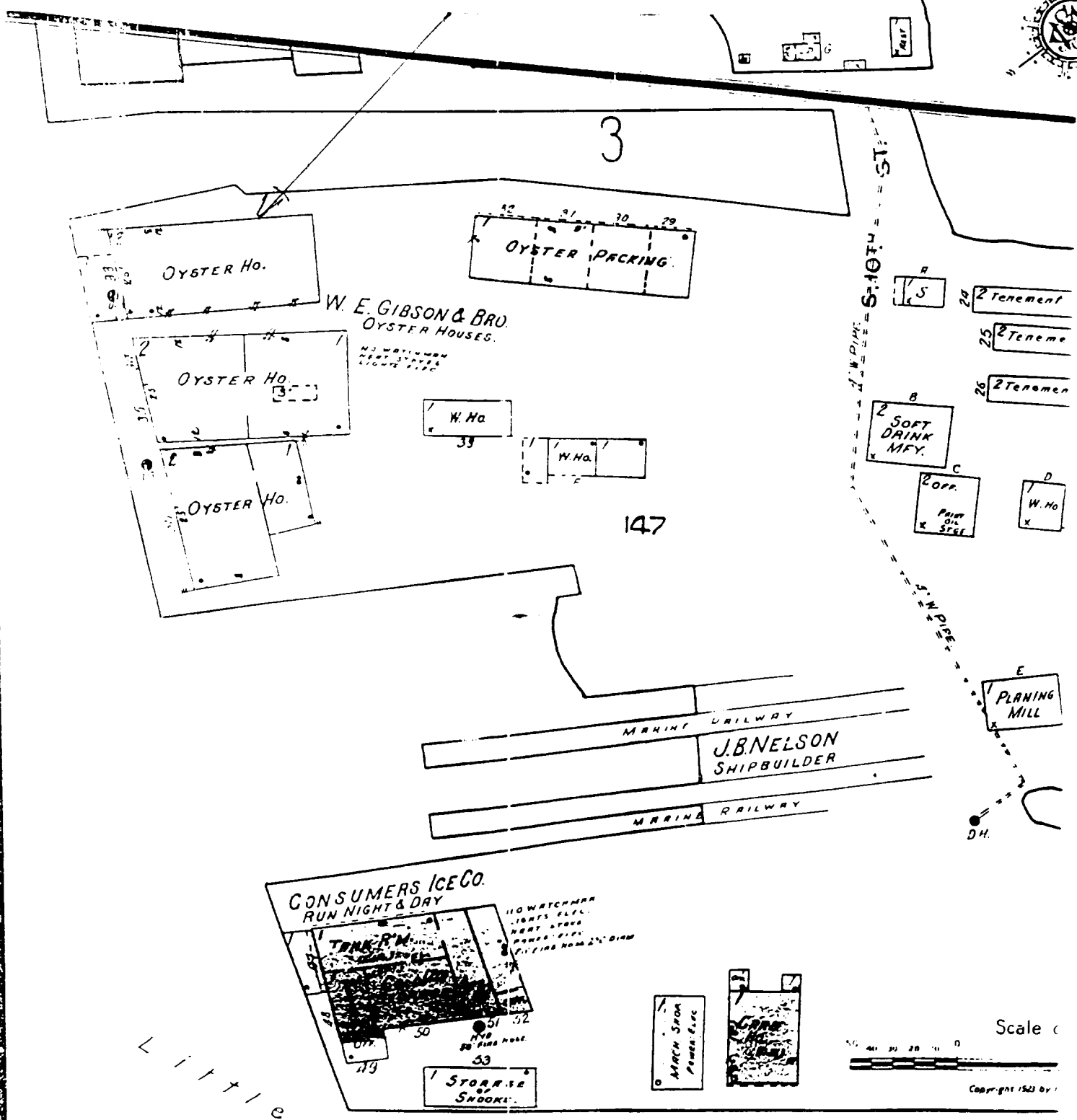
Little Annessex River



S-510, W. E. Gibson & Brother  
Sanborn Insurance Map, 1911

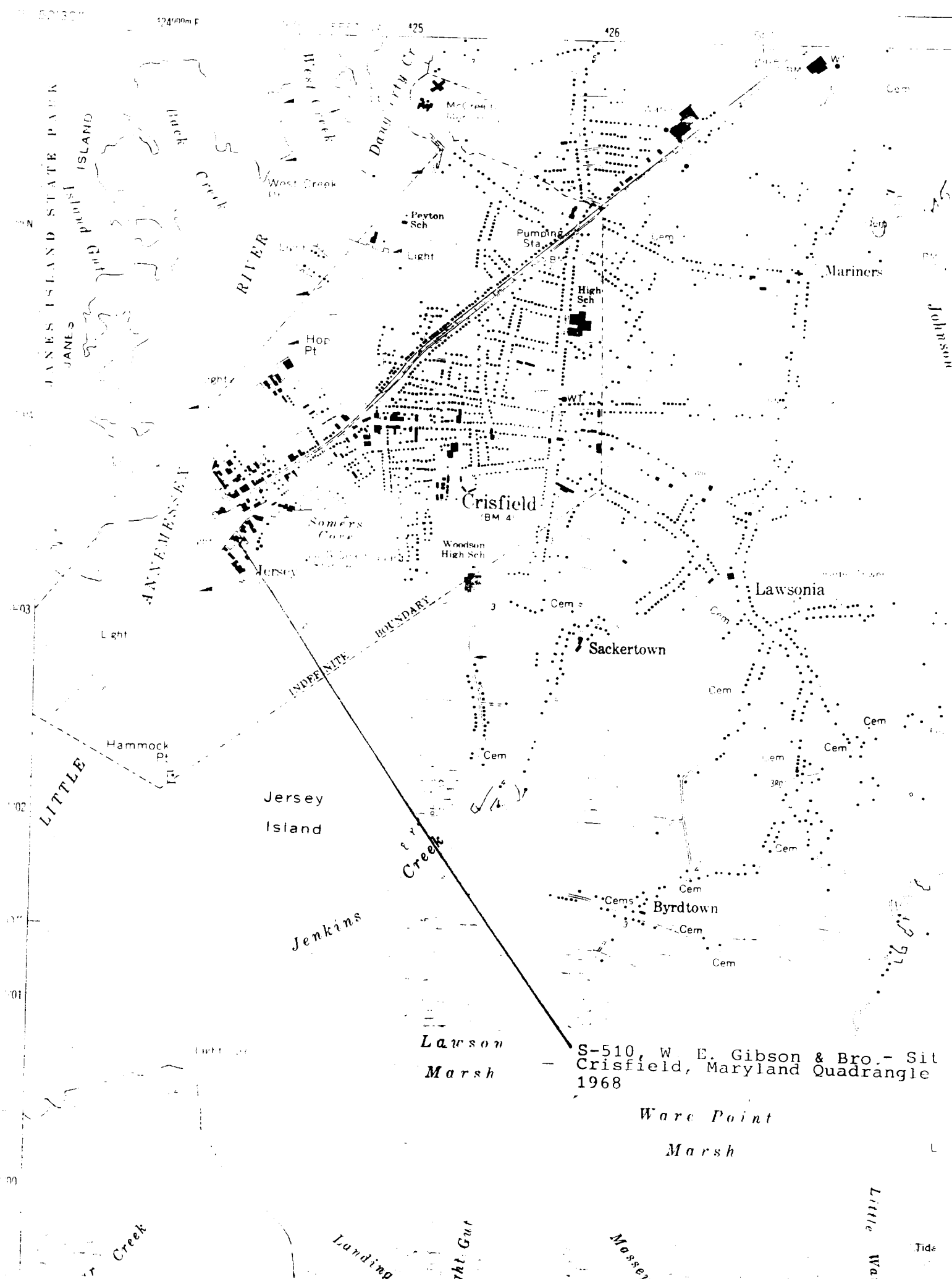
DOCK FISHERY CO.  
OYSTER HO.  
CHUCKLE  
CON. H.

S-510, W.E. Gibson & Brother  
- Sanborn Insurance Map, 1923



Annemessex River





S-510, W. E. Gibson & Bro. - Sit  
Crisfield, Maryland Quadrangle  
1968

Ware Point  
Marsh



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W. E. CIE  
SON AND BRO.

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